

# Israelis capture key Soviet missile

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Washington — In an action of immense importance to American as well as Israeli defense experts, the Israelis have captured intact one of the most advanced Soviet-built anti-aircraft missile systems.

The complete SA-6 missile unit, seized on the west bank of the Suez Canal, was described by government sources here as the one type of weapon used in the Middle East war of which United States forces had no first-hand knowledge or experience. Other Soviet missiles used by the Arab states had been encountered in Vietnam.

Military sources credit the SA-6, a mobile system rather than a stationary unit like the SA-2 and SA-3 anti-aircraft missiles, with taking a high—perhaps the highest—toll of the American-built planes lost by the Israelis in the war's first days. Israel lost 108 planes in all during the war.

The capture of a complete SA-6 system, including the all-important radar, will give weapons experts a "fix" on the exact status of Russian development at a precise time and enable them to develop measures for countering the system.

The exploit, carried out in the interest of Israeli defense, can be expected, therefore, to yield results of the utmost importance to defense planners here and elsewhere in the Western alliance, government sources said.

They said it was likely that the SA-6 unit would be brought to the U.S. where new counter-measures can be tested against it.

The SA-6 system consists of a half-track transporter-launcher that carries three missile launchers and a radar unit called "straight flush."

The radar is said to be capable of operating in several different frequency ranges, greatly complicating the task of detecting the frequency it is operating on at a given moment. This makes it difficult to jam the system.

Experts here said the missiles can attack planes flying at altitudes from 300 feet to 60,000 feet and at distances of 20 to 25 nautical miles.

Countermeasures include "chaff," or tin foil, discharged from planes to clutter missile radar, airborne electronic devices that jam radar if its transmitting frequency is known and antiradiation missiles that home on the anti-aircraft missile radar and destroy it.

The Defense Department would not comment yesterday on the Israeli capture of the SA-6 system.

Jerry W. Friedheim, the Pentagon spokesman, announced, meanwhile, that all United States forces had returned to their normal operating status following last week's worldwide alert—with the exception of the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean.

The 6th Fleet increased its state of readiness when the Middle East war began and maintains that condition, Mr. Friedheim said.

He said it was "probable" that the Soviet airborne forces, reported on an alert last week, have returned to normal.